

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

BA-128

0301285104

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Hereford Farm

AND/OR COMMON

Hereford Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

North side Piney Hill Road, East of I-83

CITY, TOWN

Hereford

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd Congressional District

3rd Councilmanic District

COUNTY
Baltimore

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES, RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES, UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Northern Corridor Associates

Telephone #: Unlisted

STREET & NUMBER

c/o S.L. Cornblatt 2531 St. Paul Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Courts Building

Liber #: EHK JR. 5379

Folio #: 25

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21030

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

BALTIMORE COUNTY HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY

DATE (ongoing since 1964)

Entered 7/29/85

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSMARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
21 State Circle

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

DESCRIPTION

BA-128

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☒ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Hereford Farms is a telescope house built over approximately the space of a century, starting with the middle segment. The earliest portion was once believed to have been built about 1714 by John Merryman "of Clover Hill", but 1737 might be a more likely date. The center link is of stone, $1\frac{1}{2}$ stories, with a gambrel roof that once continued as a porch roof. The front is four bays across. Three dormers are set in the east side of the upstairs roof. The porch, now fallen, had been supported by four posts (with Victorian scrolls). The west facade of the same section is 4 bays, with only one roof dormer. A small, centered, end chimney rises from the south wall.

The second element added to the house was the kitchen wing, four bays wide on the east facade, $1\frac{1}{2}$ stories high with a gable roof. A large square inside chimney is centered at the south end of the kitchen. The south end wall is penetrated by one door at ground level and by two square loft windows at the second, or attic, level. The west facade of the kitchen structure is two bays wide, with one dormer at the roof level.

The third and final section of the house is the $2\frac{1}{2}$ story main block, located on the north end; this section is 3 bays wide on the east facade; there had been a porch, possibly a late addition but now fallen, along the entire width of the east facade. This porch was supported by four posts decorated with Victorian scrolls. The design of the main block itself is a highly simplified Federal. There are two pedimented dormers on the east facade. The roof is gabled and there are overhanging eaves at the sides. There is a box cornice on the east. A chimney rises outside the south wall between the main block and the middle section. On the north there is an inside chimney, centrally located. The porch of this block did not match the porch on the center section in either height or design. On the west facade, the main block is two bays wide and there are two dormers. At first story level on the west facade are gaping holes that once housed a window and a door.

By 1973 or before, the house had lost its porches. Seepage, vandalism, and the depredations of woodwork hunters have ruined most of the interior materials while the house has stood untended. A large part of the roof fell in during the severe winter of 1976-77. The walls remain, coated with stucco material, and could be reused in a restoration of the house.

Dimensions were given as 36 by 36 in one wing and 20 x 73 in another by the 1918 District 7 Tax Ledger, f. 671, when Hereford Farm was property of Mrs. Eliz. A. Mays.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c.1737

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

UNKNOWN

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Hereford Farms is a Maryland Telescope House built in a number of steps with its oldest segment possibly dating from the early 1700's when the first of five generations of Merrymans acquired the land. The house has suffered from neglect for thirteen or more years, but the walls stand and a number of outbuildings survive in better condition than the mansion.

The Merrymans appeared in the county fairly early, supposedly having migrated from Virginia. Charles Merryman patented Merryman's Lott in 1689 and Merryman's Pasture in 1705. Listing himself as a carpenter in the deed, he gave these properties to sons John and Samuel in 1714. These deeds were on both sides of Jones Falls near present University Parkway and became the estate called Clover Hill.

John Merryman of Clover Hill acquired 102 acres in the upper county in 1738 from Thomas Broad and promptly deeded it to son John, Jr. This second John Merryman, distinguished as Junior or John of Hereford, acquired another place called Merryman's Lot (100 acres) in the upper county under lease in 1751. That lot became part of a resurvey called "Hereford" in 1771 (854 acres). In 1789, a second survey was made of all his properties along "the Middle Road leading from Baltimore Town to York Town" under the title of "Hereford Resurveyed" --- some 1,038-3/4 acres (Patents LC No. D, f. 397). John Merryman Jr. also patented Merryman's Mount in 1771 (Patents BC & GS No. 45:43).

The year 1714 --- obviously much too early --- is the date attributed to John Merryman's construction of the middle section of the present house; the beginning of the telescope house was a 1½ story stone dwelling, with gambrel roof, somewhat similar to houses found in tidewater areas.

John Merryman of Hereford (1703-1777) is credited with putting up the first stone barn, a spring house, and fieldstone slave quarters. He is buried along with his wife Sarah Rogers Merryman (1703-1775) in a walled plot to the northeast of the house.

The third John Merryman (1736-1814) moved to Baltimore Town in 1763 and became active in local affairs and had a hand in having Baltimore Town incorporated as a city. He married Sarah Rogers Smith, widow of William Smith.

The 1798 tax list shows that the house was still a single section of stone, measuring 21 by 40 feet; separate kitchen was listed as stone, 22 x 26. This tax data undermines traditional accounts that the second John Merryman was builder of what is now called the kitchen wing.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Some time in history that wing was added on the south, a building so plain that it could easily be taken for colonial.

The son of the third John Merryman and Sarah Rogers Smith Merryman was Nicholas Rogers Merryman, born in 1778. This Merryman returned to the farm and is credited in family tradition with building a 2½ story portion that became the main block. This section has to post-date the 1798 tax list and it bears certain characteristics of the Federal period.

The next owner was Henry N. Merryman, son of Nicholas R. Merryman and his second wife, Clarissa Philpot. This Merryman of the fifth generation pledged the property to Samuel George of Harford County to secure an \$11,000 mortgage in 1878. Some years later, Merryman found himself unable to repay the amount.

The mortgage had passed to Mrs. Elizabeth A. Smith, and her trustee advertised the property three times before finding a firm purchaser. The tract names mentioned in the trustee's advertisement in the Maryland Journal were: Hereford Resurveyed, Elezy's Grove, Merryman's Mount, and Ivy Hills. The ad stated:

This tract is one of the most valuable and productive estates in Baltimore County. The improvements comprise the Mansion House surrounded by a well shaded lawn, stone barn, stone and frame stable, tenant house and other outbuildings and on the tumpike a stone dwelling and stable and other outbuildings.

A second ad included the notation: "There is also on the premises a valuable Iron Ore Bank & Limestone Quarry." (Judicial Records JWS 114:132, 141, and JWS 127:503.)

The trustee sold the property at \$30 per acre or a total of \$7,500, to G. Albert Mays.

Mays and his wife Elizabeth A. Mays were newly married and set about improving the property, building a new barn and raising a family of six. Andrew Clemens interviewed a number of Mays children for his 1973 paper on the house, and Mrs. Jackie Mays Johnson told him of the social life of the times, a round of parties and visits carried out by horse and carriage. To quote from the Clemens study:

Hereford Farm life included the production of most of the occupants' food, hogs were butchered, crops planted and harvested, wood cut, horses groomed for the state fair. School for the Mays children was held in the near-by quarters, conducted by a schoolmaster who lived on the second floor of the small stone house to the west of the main house. The servants and field hands, many of whom came with Mrs. Mays in 1890 from her father's home in Norrisville, also lived on the property. One of the field hand's houses can be seen today [1973] a one room plaster and beam shack across the expressway.

Tales are still remembered of the times that the Mays sons brought home Indian relics from the woods bordering the fields, of sledding on the hill above Piney Hill Road in winter, of the party at which one young lady rode her horse through the Great Hall and jumped the fountain in the front yard. Mrs. Johnson also recalls her father's love for the old house, how he kept the original finish on the paneled woodwork and doors, trimmed the green lawns, planted the holly trees and stocked the fountain with golden carp, some of which escaped down stream in the spring to end up in the reservoir.

In 1926 after the death of Mr. Mays, the Hereford Farm was sold to William R. "Bill" Whittingham, a bachelor whose love of horses led him to issue an invitation to the Grand National Steeplechase to use his valley as a course for the April race. From 1935 until the onset of the Second World War, the race was run on this course.

Mr. Whittingham in turn sold the house and 394 acres of land to Mr. and Mrs. B. Hamilton Roche. Mr. Roche was formerly with the University of Wisconsin and an expert in dairy feeds. Under his ownership the Hereford Farm became known for the experimental work in dairy feeds.

Mr. Roche is believed to have been the first Baltimore County farmer to put in a crop of soy beans, starting with a lot raised for feed in 1945. The farm was the first to produce the beans for oil and Roche sold the finished crop back to the same firm that had supplied him with seed beans.

Shortly before the sale of the farm by the Roches in 1964, a fire took place in the third story of the main block and a large portion of the roof was destroyed. After that the house was no longer inhabited, although the land has been farmed under lease.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Andrew Clemens, "Hereford Farmhouse," History Trails, 7 (Spring 1973): p. 9

1798 Baltimore County Tax List, "Back River Upper Hunched," Item No. 1064.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 235.40

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE NONE

COUNTY NONE

STATE

COUNTY

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John W. McGrair

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore County Office of Planning & Zoning

DATE

1977

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

TELEPHONE

494-3495

CITY OR TOWN

Towson, Maryland

STATE

Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438